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For Immediate Release: May 20, 2003

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Best Metal Finishing Opens, Commerce Awards Grants

OSGOOD —Propelling Ripley County toward an even brighter future, today Best Metal Finishing officially opened its new manufacturing facility in Osgood.

Gary Walston, president of Best Metal Finishing, Darrel Scott, operations manager, and Duane Ohlmansiek, plant manager, joined Indiana Department of Commerce Region 9 Director Vicki Kellerman for ribbon cutting.

Located in Osgood at Railroad Ave. and County Road North, Best Metal Finishing will invest \$3.7 million to build a new 42,000-square-foot facility and create 30 new jobs by June of 2003. Housing state-of-the art zinc and zinc phosphate plating lines, the plant's finished fasteners are found in a variety of products such as fractional horsepower motors, automotive applications, household appliance's and furniture.

"We are excited about all the possibilities that this new facility represents," said Gary Whitehead, Best Metal Finishing Controller. "Osgood is the perfect location for this facility and along with the outstanding workforce available here, and the support of the state through the Indiana Department of Commerce, we look forward to years of growth,"

Illinois-based Elgin National owns Best Metal Finishing, which is a global leader in the mining and bulk materials handling industries. The company supplies a wide range of industrial customers with products including fasteners, electrical equipment and maintenance supplies. Elgin National has operations across the United States, recording sales of approximately \$191.6 million in the year 2001 and employing more than 780 employees.

"On behalf of Governor O'Bannon and Lt. Governor Kernan and the citizens of Indiana let me just say how excited we are about this project," said Kellerman, who as regional director is the state's lead economic development official for Southeastern Indiana. "Best Metal Finishing is showing a tremendous commitment to Ripley County and we at the state level are proud to partner in their efforts. This facility means new jobs, investment and a whole lot of potential for growth. We welcome them with open arms."

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In support of the project the Indiana Department of Commerce awarded Best Metal Finishing a total of \$92,000 in assistance. Best Metal Finishing will use a \$12,000 Skills Enhancement Fund grant to train new workers in skills required by the expansion. Commerce also awarded the town of Osgood \$80,000 from the Industrial Development Grant Fund (IDGF) to extend water mains, add fire hydrants and install wastewater service at the facility, an amount that will be matched by Osgood, the Rising Sun Regional Foundation and the Reynolds Foundation.

Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in basic work skills and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. Commerce awards IDGF grants to municipalities that undertake infrastructure projects in support of new business development. The grants help defray the costs associated with the expansion of an existing company or the location of a new manufacturing facility.

Companies interested in learning more about the training grants or other Commerce incentives should contact their regional Commerce office at 800.463.8081, or access its Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.

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